

Message Text

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R 150006Z MAY 75

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USNMR SHAPE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 112998

EXDIS FOR GEN HAIG MIL ADDEE HANDLE AS SPECAT EXCLUSIVE

FOLLOWING REPEAT PARIS 12231 SENT SECSTATE INFO LONDON BONN
NATO DATED MAY 14.

QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 12231

EXDIS

DEPARTMENT PLEASE PASS DOD FOR SECRETARY SCHLESINGER
AND USNMR SHAPE FOR GENERAL HAIG

E.O. 11652: XGDS1

TAGS: PFOR' MNUC, MPOL, FR

SUBJECT: MEETING WITH FRENCH MOD BOURGES MAY 13

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: IN MY FIRST EXTENSIVE SUBSTANTIVE
MEETING WITH GOF DEFENSE MINISTER BOURGES, OUR WIDE-
RANGING DISCUSSION COVERED U.S. RELIABILITY IN THE WAKE
OF VIETNAM, THE NEED TO MAINTAIN U.S. FORCES IN EUROPE,
THE FUTURE OF THE U.S. NUCLEAR COMMITMENT TO EUROPE,
FRANCO-AMERICAN MILITARY RELATIONS, AND THE CONCEPT OF A
EUROPEAN DEFENSE STRUCTURE. BOURGES WAS IN TOTAL COMMAND
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OF THE SUBSTANCE THAT WE DISCUSSED, AND PUT FORWARD HIS

VIEWS IN A CANDID AND ARTICULATE FASHION. BOURGES
INVITED SECRETARY SCHLESINGER TO VISIT PARIS (SEPTEL).
END SUMMARY.

2. VIETNAM:

BOURGES SAID THAT NOTHING IS FURTHER FROM THE TRUTH
THAN TO SAY THAT THE U.S. WAS MILITARILY DEFEATED IN
VIETNAM. THE U.S. HAD NOT COMMITTED EVEN "ONE PERCENT OR
ONE-TENTH OF ONE PERCENT" OF ITS MILITARY MIGHT IN SOUTH-
EAST ASIA. CONSEQUENTLY, HE SAID, FROM A MILITARY POINT
OF VIEW, THE RECENT EVENTS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA DID NOT
SHAKE HIS CONFIDENCE IN THE POWER OF THE U.S. FROM A
POLITICAL POINT OF VIEW, HOWEVER, HE SPECULATED THAT THE
VIETNAM EPISODE MIGHT HAVE A PROFOUND IMPACT ON THE
DETERMINATION OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE TO SAFEGUARD THEIR
VITAL NATIONAL INTERESTS ABROAD. I REPLIED THAT THE
REALITY OF AMERICAN INTERESTS IN EUROPE HAS NOT CHANGED
AS A RESULT OF THE EVENTS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA. BOTH THE
AMERICAN GOVERNMENT AND THE AMERICAN PEOPLE WOULD
CONTINUE TO UNDERSTAND THE DIMENSION OF THEIR VITAL
INTEREST IN THE CONTINUED SECURITY OF WESTERN EUROPE.
I ADDED THAT OUR DETERMINATION TO MAINTAIN 300,000 TROOPS
IN EUROPE DEMONSTRATES THIS RESOLVE.

3. U.S. TROOPS IN EUROPE:

PICKING UP MY COMMENT ON MAINTAINING OUR FORCES IN
EUROPE, BOURGES SAID THAT NO ONE SHOULD DOUBT THE PRO-
FOUND TIES THAT EXIST BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND
EUROPE. NEVERTHELESS, IN THE WAKE OF VIETNAM THE
AMERICAN PEOPLE MAY BE ATTRACTED TO THE IDEA THAT U.S. NUCLEAR
WEAPONS ARE ONLY TO BE USED FOR THE DEFENSE OF U.S. TER-
RITORY. WITH THIS IN MIND, HE CONTINUED, IT IS MORE
IMPORTANT THAN EVER THAT THE U.S. MAINTAIN ITS TROOPS IN
EUROPE TO SHOW TO THE SOVIETS -- AS WELL AS THE WESTERN
EUROPEANS -- THAT THE U.S. INTENDS TO KEEP ITS ULTIMATE
STRATEGIC NUCLEAR DETERRENT COUPLED TO THE DEFENSE OF
EUROPE IN AN UNAMBIGUOUS WAY. WITHOUT CONTRADICTING THE
PSYCHOLOGICAL VALUE OF MAINTAINING OUR TROOPS IN EUROPE,
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I UNDERLINED THE VERY REAL MILITARY REASONS FOR MAIN-
TAINING AND IMPROVING NATO'S CREDIBLE CONVENTIONAL
DEFENSE, WHICH MUST INCLUDE U.S. FORCES IN EUROPE AT
THEIR CURRENT LEVEL.

4. U.S. NUCLEAR COMMITMENT TO EUROPE:

IN ANALYZING THE MEANING OF THE VLADIVOSTOK SALT

AGREEMENT, BOURGES CONCLUDED THAT IT WAS IN THE INTEREST OF BOTH SUPER POWERS TO LIMIT THE NUMBER OF STRATEGIC NUCLEAR DELIVERY SYSTEMS ON EACH SIDE. SUCH A LIMITATION WOULD EASE THE PRESSURES ON EACH COUNTRY'S DEFENSE BUDGET AND WOULD PUT AN END TO THE POTENTIALLY DE-STABILIZING ESCALATION OF SOVIET AND AMERICAN STRATEGIC NUCLEAR WEAPONS. BUT, HE ADDED, WHILE THESE CONSIDERATIONS WERE UNDERSTANDABLE TO THE FRENCH, HE PERSONALLY REMAINED CONCERNED THAT THE SOVIETS WOULD CONCLUDE THAT THE VLADIVOSTOK ACCORD EFFECTIVELY NEUTRALIZED THE LINKAGE OF U.S. STRATEGIC FORCES TO THE DEFENSE OF EUROPE. HE REPEATED THIS "DE-COUPPING" CONCERN SEVERAL TIMES -- BOTH IN CONNECTION WITH SALT IN GENERAL AND VLADIVOSTOK IN PARTICULAR, AND IN CONNECTION WITH THE NEED TO MAINTAIN U.S. TROOPS IN EUROPE AS DESCRIBED ABOVE IN PARA 3.

5. FRANCO-AMERICAN MILITARY RELATIONS:

BOURGES SAID THAT A MAJOR IMPROVEMENT NEEDS TO BE MADE IN THE EXCHANGE OF MILITARY INFORMATION BETWEEN FRANCE AND THE U.S., AND BETWEEN FRANCE AND NATO. WITHOUT GOING INTO SPECIFICS, HE NOTED THAT THE SENSITIVE AND CLOSELY GUARDED DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN GENERAL HAIG AND GENERAL MAURIN WERE A WELCOME SIGN THAT BOTH SIDES RECOGNIZED THIS PROBLEM AND WERE PREPARED TO UNDERTAKE THE ACTIONS NEEDED TO RESOLVE IT.

6. EUROPEAN DEFENSE STRUCTURE:

BOURGES SAID THAT IT IS DESIRABLE TO HAVE A "REAL, AUTONOMOUS EUROPEAN DEFENSE CAPABILITY" THAT WOULD REST ON "INDEPENDENCE" OF DECISION. HE ADMITTED THAT THIS

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TYPE OF "AUTONOMOUS/INDEPENDENT" EUROPEAN DEFENSE WAS EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TO ORGANIZE FOR POLITICAL REASONS. THE UNITED STATES SHOULD NOT CONSIDER THAT EUROPE'S EFFORTS TO ORGANIZE ITS OWN DEFENSE ALONG THESE LINES WERE CONTRARY TO U.S. INTERESTS. ON THE CONTRARY, HE CONTINUED, THE U.S. SHOULD WELCOME THE STRONG AND RELIABLE EUROPEAN DEFENSE ELEMENT THAT NEEDS TO BE CREATED AS A REPLACEMENT TO THE WEAK AND DIVIDED CONDITION OF THE EUROPEAN ALLIES TODAY. I REPLIED THAT IT WAS DIFFICULT TO TALK OF THE NEED TO MAINTAIN THE U.S. DEFENSE COMMITMENT TO EUROPE -- INCLUDING THE PROVISION OF OUR STRATEGIC NUCLEAR UMBRELLA TO THE DEFENSE OF EUROPE -- AND AT THE SAME TIME TALK ABOUT "AUTONOMOUS/INDEPENDENT" CAPABILITIES AND DECISION-MAKING ON THE PART OF THE EUROPEANS. I STRESSED THAT

THE INTER-DEPENDENCE OF WESTERN DEFENSE MUST REST ON
NATO.

7. COMMENT: BASED ON MY SEVERAL DISCUSSIONS WITH
BOURGES, IT IS CLEAR THAT HE IS IN FULL COMMAND OF THE
KEY POLITICAL/MILITARY SUBJECTS OF FRANCE'S DEFENSE
STRATEGY. NOT SURPRISINGLY, HE IS PREOCCUPIED WITH THE
STRATEGIC NUCLEAR DIMENSION OF DETERRENCE AND DEFENSE,
AND A GOOD DEAL LESS INTERESTED IN THE CONVENTIONAL
ASPECTS OF DEFENSE. HIS REMARKS TO ME INVARIABLY HAVE
BEEN FRANK AND REFLECT A COMMAND OF DETAILS
AS WELL AS GENERALITIES. LIKE FORMER MOD GALLEY, HE IS
A MAN WHO IS INTELLECTUALLY AND PASSIONATELY INTERESTED
IN DEFENSE AFFAIRS. HE DISPLAYS NONE OF THE DISINTEREST
THAT SOMETIMES CHARACTERIZED HIS PREDECESSOR SOUFFLET.
CONSEQUENTLY, I BELIEVE HE IS A DEFENSE MINISTER WITH
WHOM WE CAN ESTABLISH A CONSTRUCTIVE DIALOGUE, ALTHOUGH
WE ARE NO MORE LIKELY TO CHANGE HIS FUNDAMENTAL CONCEPTS
OF DEFENSE THAN HE IS LIKELY TO CHANGE OURS. A FRANK
AND ACTIVE U.S. DIALOGUE WITH BOURGES, HOWEVER, MAY WELL
REVEAL LARGER AREAS OF COMMUNALITY BETWEEN FRENCH AND U.S
POLITICAL/MILITARY INTERESTS THAN GENERALLY HAS BEEN
BELIEVED IN THE PAST TO BE THE CASE.
RUSH UNQUOTE KISSINGER

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